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Viewing cable 09ATHENS1591, GREEK DOMESTIC TERRORISTS STRIKE POLICE STATION

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09ATHENS1591**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ATHENS1591	2009-10-30 15:35	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Athens

Appears in these articles:

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/10/30
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ABLD](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREEK DOMESTIC TERRORISTS STRIKE POLICE STATION

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

Summary

¶1. (SBU) A group of six unidentified individuals carried out an attack with automatic weapons on the police station in the Athens suburb of Agia Paraskevi, eight kilometers north of the Embassy, on the evening of October 27, wounding six police officers, one of them seriously. In addition to firing a reported 100 rounds in the fifteen-second attack, the assailants also apparently threw a hand grenade. The attack is the latest example in the upsurge of domestic terrorist activity since the December 2008 riots, and it underscores the groups' increasing willingness to launch large attacks with the potential for collateral damage. End Summary.

A New Attack

¶2. (C) According to police sources, the attack was carried out by four individuals on two motorcycles, who are believed to have followed a four-officer foot patrol to the station before the attack, which occurred at 2145 local time, close to the 2200 shift change when more police officers would be outside the station. A third motorcycle with two riders stood at the top of the street, blocking the road. The attackers dismounted the motorcycles and fired a reported 100 rounds, believed to be from AK-47s. Witnesses also heard the sound of an explosion, which is believed to have come from a hand grenade. The attackers then walked back to the motorcycles and sped away. They switched to different motorcycles, all of which were stolen, during their getaway. Police later located the abandoned motorcycles (two of which were left with motors and lights on outside a metro station) but the assailants escaped.

¶3. (SBU) Six police officers were wounded in the attack; the most seriously injured is still unconscious and her recovery is unsure. Following the attack, a seventh person - a civilian bystander - was taken to a nearby hospital in a state of shock. On October 28, new Minister of Citizens' Protection Mihalīs Chrysochoidis called the attack a "blind blow aimed at the whole of Greek society" and declared "these cowardly assassins will be arrested and brought to justice." Some commentators have suggested the attack could have been prompted by the Ministry of Citizens' Protection's announcement October 26 of a 600,000-euro reward for information leading to the arrest of three accused bank robbers, whose past crimes (the most recent in 2006) are believed to be tied to domestic terrorist organizations. The investigation has revealed, however, that some of the motorcycles were stolen prior to the reward announcement, suggesting that plans for this attack were already in the works. The newspaper Eleftherotypia reported October 30 that it had received a "very strange" proclamation of responsibility from a previously unknown group called Bands of Proletarian People's Self-Defense. It is not yet clear if this claim of responsibility is credible.

Comment

¶4. (C) This is the latest - and one of the most serious - attacks on police since the December 6, 2008, killing of a teenager provoked major riots and turned the Greek police into the most popular target for domestic terrorist organizations, including Revolutionary Struggle and Sect of Revolutionaries. (Other leading targets are banks and other symbols of capitalism.) Several officers have been wounded, and one was killed in an

execution-style attack in June. Particularly troubling is the increasing willingness of Greek terrorist groups to engage indiscriminate attacks that run the risk of civilian casualties. The attack is also a major test for Chrysochoidis and the rest of the new Greek government, who have been at pains to demonstrate they will be tough on violent groups despite the ruling PASOK party's leftist orientation. With a number of significant dates on the calendar before the end of the year - the traditional November 17 protest, the December 6, 2008 anniversary of the killing of the teenager, and the scheduled December 15, 2009 start date of the trial of the officer who shot the teenager - most observers expect the confrontation between the state and domestic terrorists to get worse before it gets better. Another incident took place in the early hours earlier today, October 30, 2009, when a small bomb went off at the entrance to the apartment building of opposition MP Marieta Yannakou, who sponsored controversial education reform legislation several years ago. As of September 2009, over 330 security incidents (defined to include incendiary and explosive attacks, as well as those involving small arms, grenades, and other infantry-style weaponry) have been noted by the Embassy, a record number for any year, and one we have reached with three more active months to go in the calendar year.

Speckhard